STANDARD FORM NO. 64

RS

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

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TO : D. M. Ladd

DATE: April 30, 1950

FROM : A. H. Belmont

SUBJECT: WILLIAM WOLFE WEISBAND
ESPIONAGE - R
(Bureau file [redacted])

~~ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED DATE 6/4/82 BY~~

Tolson ✓
Ladd ✓
Clegg
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PURPOSE

To secure your approval for the Washington Field Office to interview the entitled individual.

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Reason-FCIM II, 1-2.4.2 ~~25~~
Date of Review ~~2/19/98~~ 2/19/82

SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION

Weisband first came to our attention as a result of our investigation of Victor Cubarkin who is reported to be a strong sympathizer of the Communist Party. The association of Weisband and Cubarkin was submitted to IDA by letter dated September 22, 1949, and on November 8, 1949, the Army requested the Bureau to conduct a full field loyalty investigation concerning Weisband.

The loyalty investigation was completed on January 27, 1950, and the investigation failed to disclose any disloyal information. (121-21098; [redacted]

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York's Allegations ~~(S)~~ (X) U

On April 10, 1950, Jones Orin York was interviewed by Agents of the Los Angeles Office, at which time he stated that some time after January 1940 he was approached by an unknown individual (Weisband) who identified himself by presenting a torn half of a picture of Shirley Temple and offered to tell York the birthdate of his, York's, mother. (This procedure had been arranged between York and his former principal, the unknown subject "Werner.") Weisband inquired of York whether he could obtain information and when the latter stated that he did not possess a camera, Weisband furnished York with the money and the latter purchased a used Contax 3 camera with a Sonnar F 1.5 lens. This camera was used by York to photograph materials, the film being given to Weisband from whom York received payments on several occasions. York recalled having three separate meetings with Weisband in the Los Angeles area and he stated on one occasion he received a long distance telephone call from him when Weisband was in Pendleton, Oregon. In the course of the meetings, Weisband told York not to pay any attention to military installations but to obtain material regarding aircraft, armaments, electrical devices, radar, et cetera. He also supplied York with a list of material in which the Soviets were interested. York, however, disposed of this list. According to York, his

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cases clear text. General Clarke and Captain Wenger previously have indicated to Supervisor S. W. Reynolds their concern over a leak in the Armed Forces Security Agency. They have stated that they felt a leak appeared to exist since every time the AFSA has made progress in breaking the domestic Russian systems the Russians have changed the systems. (~~S~~)u [redacted]

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REASONS FAVORING INTERVIEW

When Jones Orin York was interviewed on April 10, 1950, he admitted engaging in aircraft espionage with the unknown subject "Brooks" from approximately 1936 to February 1937. As a result of his association with "Brooks," York was placed in contact with the unknown subject "Werner" with whom he associated until approximately the fall of 1938. Contacts with "Werner" were resumed by York shortly after January 1940 and on "Werner's" instruction York was operated as an espionage agent by William Wolfe Weisband until approximately the fall of 1942. (~~S~~)u

A review of the Bureau files concerning the names "Brooks" and "Werner" failed to reveal any information which can be used to effect a positive identification of either individual. (~~S~~)u

Should an interview with Weisband be productive, the possibility exists that he will positively identify both "Brooks" and "Werner" and the unknown woman who was to contact York and inquire about his "violin." (~~S~~)u

RECOMMENDATION

In view of the current developments in this case, it is suggested that approval be granted for the Washington Field Office to interview Weisband concerning his association and dealings with Jones Orin York in such a manner that the latter's possible reactivation in Soviet espionage will not be compromised. (~~S~~)u

During the interview with Weisband he will be confronted with the fact that on two separate occasions he answered "Yes" to the pertinent question on his applications for Federal employment.

Prior to this confrontation General Clarke should be advised of the existence of these statements in the AFSA files.

An interview with Weisband at this time will not interfere with or jeopardize any current investigation and if Weisband is cooperative, valuable information concerning Soviet intelligence may be obtained. (~~S~~)u

In the event you approve, the Washington Field Office will be instructed to effect arrangements for the interview with Weisband. The Agents who handle this interview will be instructed to confer with the Bureau Supervisor handling this case.

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Weisband Interviewed

On the afternoon of the same date, Special Agent H. Dudley Payne was introduced to Weisband as a Bureau Agent by Lieutenant Colonel Wade who explained to Weisband that after the latter had mentioned the name Arthur Adams he contacted Payne, a friend of his, on the basis that the Bureau is interested in obtaining all information that any individual might have concerning Arthur Adams.

As soon as Wade made this statement, Weisband interrupted the Colonel and told him that he had not mentioned the name of Adams but had instead given him the name of Arthur Abbott and that he did not know anyone by the name of Adams. Agent Payne then asked Weisband if he did know a man by the name of Arthur Adams and Weisband repeated that he did not know any individual by this name and asked whether or not Adams had ever been in the hotel business. Weisband then stated that Arthur Abbott is Credit Manager at the Statler Hotel in Washington, D. C.

The name Arthur Abbott, Hotel Statler, Washington, D. C., appears as a character reference on Weisband's personal history statement which was executed by him on August 5, 1949, in connection with his employment at the AFSA. (WFO lets 4-28-50; 121-21098-1)

Agent Payne expressed his regrets to Weisband for any inconvenience he might have caused him and explained that the reason he desired to talk to him was because the Bureau was interested in interviewing anyone who had any information concerning Arthur Adams. Following this an idle conversation ensued and Weisband departed from Colonel Wade's office.

It was Agent Payne's opinion that when Weisband was first introduced to him Weisband became nervous and made a point of very closely observing the Agent. It is also Agent Payne's opinion, based upon the conversation between Colonel Wade and Weisband, that Weisband had actually mentioned the name Adams in view of the fact that the conversation at that time pertained to Weisband's old contacts in New York while he was in the hotel business. With respect to Abbott, it appears that he is probably a current contact of Weisband in view of the fact that he has listed him as a reference and Weisband is in possession of a credit card with the Hotel Statler and has cashed checks there as recently as this month.

Colonel Wade was positive in his belief that Weisband had actually said Adams and not Abbott in their conversation. (WFO let 4-28-50)

[Possible Leak, AFSA] (~~S~~)u

At Arlington Hall, Weisband has been employed in [redacted] [redacted]. This traffic deals with Russian military [redacted] [redacted] and internal Russian transmissions which may be and are in many (~~S~~)u

b3 50 USC 3605(Public Law, Section 6) [per NSA]
b3 50 USC 3024(i) [per NSA]

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contacts with Weisband continued for approximately one year and terminated in about the fall of 1942, at which time Weisband indicated that he would no longer contact York but that York would possibly be contacted by a woman who would inquire regarding York's "violin." (S [redacted]) U b3 b7E

Espionage Investigation and Discovery of Surveillance

As a result of this information, an espionage investigation and physical surveillance on Weisband was begun at 7:00 P.M. on April 14 last and on April 25 Weisband informed Maurice Klein, his superior at Arlington Hall, that he was being surveilled. This incident was reported to Lieutenant Colonel Clearfield Wade who interviewed Weisband. In this interview, Weisband stated he observed that he was being followed on April 22 (en route to Havre de Grace) and on April 24 (en route to Georgetown Language School). Colonel Wade has expressed the opinion that as a result of this interview Weisband was under the impression that the individuals following him were CIC agents in view of the fact that Weisband has submitted a request for a transfer as a reserve officer from MID to the Armed Forces Security Agency. (memo,4-25-50)

File Review

In connection with the espionage investigation, Special Agent H. Dudley Payne obtained from AFSA photostatic copies of the complete file on Weisband. A review of this file discloses that the subject on his applications for Federal employment dated May 20, 1946, and May 9, 1947, answered "Yes" to the question, "Do you advocate or have you ever advocated or are you now or have you ever been a member of any organization that advocates the overthrow of the Government of the United States by force or violence?"

A separate memorandum is being submitted suggesting that Brigadier General Carter W. Clarke be advised of this.

Reference to Arthur Adams

On April 28, 1950, Lieutenant Colonel Wade advised the Washington Field Office that Weisband approached him that morning and discussed with him once again the matter of the surveillance. During the course of this conversation Wade stated the subject "out of a clear sky" mentioned that when he was in the hotel business in New York City he had known an individual named Arthur Adams but he did not see him any more.

As a result of this information, Bureau authorization was granted for an Agent to interview Weisband concerning his knowledge of Arthur Adams.

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